

THE PACIFIC Commercial Advertiser

WALTER G. SMITH - EDITOR.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 14

Judging from the high tides the hole in the bottom of the sea that the ministers used to sing about has been filled up.

As all Chinese born on these Islands are adjudged to be Americans it might be worth while for somebody to get in and organize the Chinese vote.

After the streets are wet down with oil, ladies and gentlemen, before stepping on the hall carpet or the drawing-room rug, will please wash their shoes in the tub of suds at the door.

Complaint is made that the street-sweeper scatters a germ-infested dust. We presume it does. It is in order, therefore, to thoroughly wet down the city's highways with carbolic rose-water before the sweeper starts.

The high mortality among infants, mainly concerning the Hawaiians, can hardly be attributed to the weather or the water. The temperature this summer has not been uncommonly warm and the water served to the city is, owing to the new artesian pumps, better than ever before. The chances are that the food given the native babies has much to do with the rate of mortality among them. Since poi got scarce and flour paste has been in a measure substituted for it, and since the prices of all provender went up, Hawaiian infants have had to suffer. The result has been to hasten, at far more than normal speed, the inevitable dissolution of the race.

Hawaii has had a good many tidal waves but never a big one. Other volcanic or seismic districts occasionally get a wave that does far-reaching damage. Tokio, according to tradition, once lost 100,000 people by a sudden inrush of water from the sea. The Lisbon catastrophe is a familiar story. A tidal wave followed the disturbance at Krakatoa and submerged thousands of human beings. Shortly after our Civil War the U. S. S. Waterer, lying in the harbor of Arica, Peru, was taken up by an enormous breaker which carried her over town and treetops to the base of the Andes, three miles distant. The story of that occurrence, which left the Waterer high and dry to be subsequently used as a summer hotel, is one of the most interesting in the whole literature of seismic disturbances.

CHINESE TO THE RESCUE.

One of the most noticeable things about the Eastern man who fares this way in his sea travel is his enthusiasm for Chinese servants. The deft hand, the light step, the respectful manner, the neat garb, the polite attention to duty of the Chinaman who serves his stateroom and table aboard ship make the Easterner long to get such workers for his home. A year or two ago an eminent jurist, a man from the Supreme bench of a populous Eastern State, asked a Honolulu if it was not easy to smuggle Chinese servants into the town where he lived via Canada; and if caught what the fine would be. We don't much doubt that a part of the ill-felt immigration of Chinese to the Middle and New England States is due to the eagerness of trans-Pacific travelers to replace the servants in their households—the insolent and incompetent "help" of the Eastern kitchens—with the trained menials of the Orient whom they have met in traveling.

Just what the servant problem means in the East is partly revealed in this telegram from Chicago:

CHICAGO, July 28.—The Servant Girls' Union has formulated a scale of prices as follows:

Cooks and housekeepers... \$5 to \$7 a week
General and second girls... \$4 to \$5 a week
Young and inexperienced girls... \$3 to \$4 a week

These mandates for the mistresses are now being concocted by the members of the organization, and this is to be their tenor:

"Rule 1. Work shall not begin before 5:30 a. m. and shall cease when the evening's dishes are washed and put away. Two hours each afternoon and the entire evening, at least twice a week, shall be allowed the domestic as her own."

"Rule 2. There shall be no opposition on the part of the mistress to club life on the part of the domestic. Entertainments of friends in limited numbers shall not be prohibited, provided the domestic furnishes her own refreshments."

"Rule 3. Gentlemen friends shall not be barred from the kitchen or back porch. Members of the family of the house shall not interrupt the conversation arising during said visit."

"Rule 4. Domestic shall be allowed such hours off on Monday as will permit them to visit the bargain counters of the stores and enjoy on that day the same privileges enjoyed by the mistress and her daughters."

"Rule 5. All complaints shall be made to the business agent of the union. The question of wages shall be settled at time of employment and no reduction shall be allowed."

If these servants were competent the rules might be borne; but the majority of them are slatternly, untrained, impudent and lazy, their chief business in life being to impress their employers with an idea of their social and intellectual equality. To get a better class of chambermaids and cooks has been the aspiration of the Eastern housewife for thirty years. She has tried Irish, German, Danish, Swedish and English peasants in turn; has struggled with intolerable American "help"; and wrestled with the negro problem, all to no avail; and she was just getting ready to try the Chinaman when the exclusion bars were put up.

Now there is a chance to let the bars down again. The housewife's chance to get servants from a servile race is coming. The Chinaman is knocking for entrance. He doesn't want to vote; he is sure that he is a servant and not a master; he does not insist on an eight-hour law; his vices put him to sleep at sleeping-time and don't send him to or from a mixed-ale carousal; he is honest and competent; if he sends his money back to China that doesn't hurt a country any more than does money sent back to Ireland or Germany or to the Pope. Summed all up, he is as near being a perfect servant, when properly trained, as the world can supply. The East needs him and needs him badly and the East can get him if it wants to.

CIVIL SERVICE EXPERIMENT.

The Kansas City Journal thinks with William R. Merriam, director of the census, that his experience in organizing a clerical force ought to be of value to the civil service commissioners in the future performance of their duties. The law of Congress, providing for the twelfth census required the director to put each applicant for a clerical position through such an examination as would determine his fitness for the service. Mr. Merriam says he had long thought that the civil service commissioners were not going about their duties in the right way; that they gave examinations which did not determine the qualifications of the applicant for the particular work in which he would be employed. So he determined to examine his census clerks thoroughly, but only in such branches as had reference to the duties which they would be called upon to perform, such as common arithmetic, English and geography. In arithmetic nothing was taken up save addition, multiplication and percentage, as these were all that the clerk would be required to use. In English and geography the requirements were almost primary in character, as also were certain questions with respect to historical information.

Some rather curious results are reported by Mr. Merriam. He gave examinations to 6,336 applicants, of whom only 3,530 gained more than the required 75 per cent. It would seem that the examination must have been very thorough to have cast out more than 44 per cent of the total applicants, or else the applications came from a low educational grade, for it is the record that only about 21 per cent of those examined by the regular civil service commissioners meet with failure. However, Mr. Merriam denies that his bureau invited a lower grade of scholarship than does the regular commission. His idea is that his examinations struck the weak spot in the whole of American scholarship; that the elementary nature caused more failures than would the advanced and intricate examinations of the regular commission. And here undoubtedly the director is touching upon a great public error, for it is generally admitted that under our school system children are hurried into the higher branches before they have laid a good primary foundation. He no doubt found many of his applicants puzzling over an example in common fractions who probably could work out a problem in geometry with ease and facility.

The greatest per cent of failures came from Boston, where, says Mr. Merriam, "one would expect the classical atmosphere to be so charged with learning that a very large proportion of the candidates could pass the simple requirements of the census office." Only 46 per cent of the Boston applicants could pass, while at Topeka, Kas., where the highest record in the whole country was made, the per cent was more than 76. Omaha was a close second with 75 per cent, and then came Cincinnati with 60 per cent, Chicago with 54 per cent and San Francisco with 47 per cent. Kansas should feel gratified that, so far as this educational test is concerned, she leads the whole country.

Mr. Merriam notes that many almost unbelievably ignorant persons took the examinations. He holds, however, that his experience in this regard differs in no respect from that of the regular commission. Of the ludicrous answers returned by some of the candidates he gives us many examples, a few of which we note:

"Lincoln was a great general and distinguished himself in the war of 1812."

"Abraham Lincoln was a personal friend of the colored race, and was one of the original signers of the Declaration of Independence."

"Abraham Lincoln was born in Illinois, where he worked from early morn till dewy eve as a farmer's lad until he became President."

At one of the examinations the applicants were asked to tell something of Jefferson Davis, and here are two of the answers:

"Mr. Davis was President of the United States and wrote the Declaration of Independence."

"Davis was a famous general of the war of 1812."

One young lady, evidently not much of a politician, when asked who William Cullen Bryant was, answered:

"William Cullen Bryant was the Democratic candidate for President, a silver advocate and a resident of Nebraska."

Another unfortunate, whose knowledge of geography was poor, said that the best way to reach the Atlantic ocean by water from Chicago was in a boat.

Another suggested, in answer to the same question: "Go by rail to New York, take a boat and get there." Still another said that John D. Long was "assistant secretary of the Cuban war."

A young lady, who was no doubt an ardent admirer of her country's greatness, displayed her small acquaintance with its fundamental law when asked to tell something about the Constitution. She said:

"We have the best government on earth and the constitution can't be amended."

On a young man's papers were the following question and answer:

"Why were the mass of slaves held south of the Potomac river before the war?" "Because Africa is a hot country."

But the point of Mr. Merriam's article, which appears in the Saturday Evening Post, is that sport should not be made of the ignorant and unfortunate. He urges a number of reforms in the civil service which are suggested by his own experience in organizing the census bureau, the main one being that examinations should be conducted with a view of discovering the special fitness of a candidate for the duties which he must perform, and not with the view of determining over how wide a scope of knowledge he has acquired a little learning.

EARLY CLOSING.

There are certainly two sides to the early-closing movement as a working-man's letter printed elsewhere will show. The object of the movement as we understand it is, first, to give the clerks a Saturday half-holiday; second, having given them such a resting spell, to deprive them of their customary Sunday morning excuse for not going to church. Assuredly if they get an outing on the last day of the week they will not need another on the first, and they can, without loss of necessary exercise and ozone, give time to their spiritual affairs.

But our correspondent, in all deference to the clerks and to the Christian societies that champion their cause, asks: What about the workingman? He labors on Saturday until about 4 p. m. Then he draws his pay and comes down town to buy his supplies. He wants meat, groceries, clothing, perhaps tobacco, new tools now and then and plenty of other things. All stores are closed save those in Chinatown and he goes there, possibly getting what he wants and possibly not, but to the extent of his trade taking business away from the white firms. The workingman would rather deal with the latter and we assume that business men would rather have him.

Would the stores be willing to open for two hours Sunday morning for the benefit of the workingmen? Probably not; and in any event the law as it stands would forbid and the clerks would object. So would the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association. What then? It is up to the early-closers to say.

How would it do for the merchants, before irrevocably committing themselves to the Saturday half-holiday, to arrange to try the scheme for two weeks? With the experience thus gained they would be in better shape than they are now, to discuss the question of permanent early closing intelligently.

Root is a Shirtwaist Man.

The heated term in Washington has developed the official shirtwaist man, Secretary Root being the leader. He does not wear his coat or waistcoat in his office, except when some one calls upon him. Then he slips on a loose, thin coat. But at other times he sits in his office coatless, with an electric fan playing upon him. Mr. Root is the only cabinet member who has adopted the shirtwaist custom, but all of the other members come very close to it. They wear the thinnest of coats and no waistcoats. Heads of departments quite generally have dropped into the shirtwaist habit while in their offices, but in nearly all cases a coat is put on when visitors are announced.

A Heroine Remembered.

The people of Hartford, inspired thereto by the Times, have contributed \$8,000 in token of their appreciation of the simple heroism of Miss Ida L. Hathaway. She was a nurse in the Hartford Hospital, where, in the line of duty, she contracted ophthalmia from a young child committed to her care of so serious a character that it led to blindness. Knowledge of the irremediable fate which had overtaken her only served to reveal the strength of the young girl's character, for she accepted it as ordered of God and without repining. Now a sympathetic community has insured Miss Hathaway's future support.

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For further information, apply to J. H. FISHER & CO., Stock and Bond Brokers, and Hawaiian agents for the sale of a limited amount of Pacific Union Oil Company stock, Stangenwald building, Merchant street.

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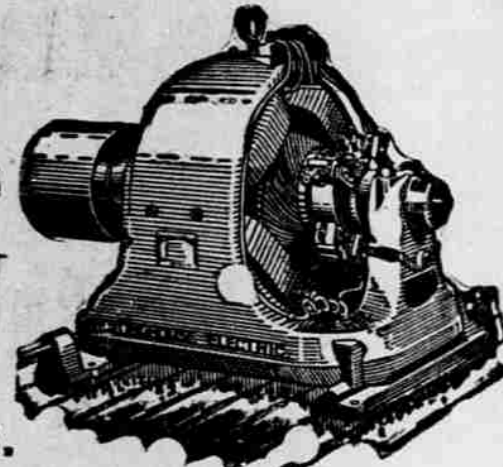
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